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Letter dated 21 April 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to share with the members of the Council the Government's concerns at a time when consultations on a draft resolution are proceeding. These concerns should be taken into account in the preparations for the deployment of the peacekeeping mission in Burundi and some of them should be clearly reflected in the draft resolution that is being prepared.

1. In his letter of 15 March 2004 to the President of the Security Council (S/2004/208), the Burundian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation indicated that one of the tasks of a United Nations peacekeeping mission in Burundi would be to create favourable conditions for the investigative work of the two commissions provided for in the Arusha Peace Agreement, namely, the International Judicial Commission of Inquiry and the National Truth And Reconciliation Commission. The Government of Burundi wishes this issue to be referred to explicitly in the mandate of the future peacekeeping mission in Burundi because the two commissions constitute indispensable pillars of the peace process, particularly with respect to establishing the truth, combating impunity and national reconciliation. Despite the importance of these commissions, which the Government of Burundi has pointed out time and again, and despite the appeals by national, regional and international human rights organizations, it appears that the United Nations does not wish to devote the necessary attention to them, as demonstrated by the delay in deploying the Secretariat assessment mission notwithstanding its authorization by the Security Council in January. This attitude is of great concern to Burundians, who are surprised to see that the United Nations is very diligent, however, in dispatching similar commissions of inquiry to other countries.

2. The future United Nations peacekeeping mission in Burundi is also called on to assist the Government in monitoring the borders in order to prevent the movement of armed groups and the circulation of arms and to help returning refugees. The Government of Burundi wishes the Security Council to treat the situation on Burundi's borders with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania in the same manner, for Burundi's security has traditionally been disrupted by movement across both borders. It will be recalled that the armed groups based in Congolese territory often preferred to cross Lake Tanganyika to travel to the United Republic of Tanzania from where they launched their attacks on Burundi, one of the reasons being that the Tanzanian border is more difficult to control. In the past, the Government of Burundi even requested the

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establishment of an international interposition commission on the border with the United Republic of Tanzania. This was not to control movements of refugees but to prevent the infiltration of armed combatants. Given that armed groups are still circulating in the subregion and that the traffic in arms is continuing on our borders, the Government of Burundi considers that the future peacekeeping mission should not include any nationals from Burundi's immediate neighbours. The mission will strive to ensure that it is above any suspicion in terms of its composition and work and is sensitive not only to the political and economic realities of the country, but also to the concerns and hopes of the population, which has just lived through 10 years of violence and particularly difficult social conditions.

3. Lastly, I wish to conclude by saluting, on behalf of the Government of Burundi, the support given to the Burundian peace process by the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan. Burundians expect the Council to accept the Secretary-General's proposals concerning the mandate and size of the peacekeeping mission proposed for Burundi and the timing of its deployment.

The Government of Burundi considers these proposals to be entirely realistic and would find it difficult to understand if the Council hesitated to do what it is doing for other countries in similar situations, particularly since it is a question of facilitating the final phase of the peace process.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Marc **Nteturuye**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative